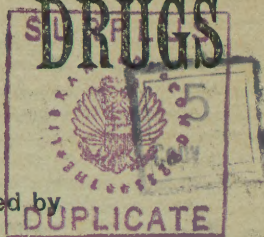


POISONOUS DRUGS

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A NATURAL DEATH ACCORDING TO A RECENT SPEECH BY DR. QUINE.



But it was the result of poisonous drugs used and recommended by State Boards of Health and State Boards of Medical Examiners, some of whom claim to have the right which they do not possess to say who shall and who shall not practice medicine in their respective states. To give any Board this power is clearly unconstitutional.

This lecture proves their utter incompetency to treat the sick, and therefore the urgent need there is for the higher standard of medical education which is not only scientific, sensible and reasonable, but safe in its application. Such we teach.

ILLINOIS HEALTH UNIVERSITY, Chicago.

**Poisons used for Medicine the Root of
Much Disease.**

The Reason Explained.

It is, no doubt, a great thing always to get to the point in any case at which disease really has what may be called "the root of it". When we think of getting at such a point we find two very important meanings that the words are capable of bearing. We have heard of a celebrated physician who was seated at a patient's bedside with his usual strong walking stick in his hand. There was a brandy bottle on the table. The patient explained that the doctor "never struck at the root of his illness". The doctor lifted his stick and smashed the brandy bottle, remarking that his patient would never have that to say again. That illustrates one meaning for the phrase in question. It represents a great many things which might be struck at in the same way. For instance, the teapot, which is itself a really good thing, might be smashed. A strong decoction of tea three or four times a day will bring on disease in the nervous system of a very serious character and so long as the comforting habit is carried on nothing in the world will cure the sufferer. Then there is tobacco, which is far more powerful and insidious than either alcohol or tea in its action upon the nerves; if it is continuously used it will produce the most distressing disease, and keep it up in spite of everything that can be done even to mitigate the symptoms. When you consider the extremely small quantity of tobacco which is required to affect the whole system in one who has not got inured to its influences you will see the truth of our statement that it is far more powerful than alcohol and tea, and also more insidious. The forms of disease that are produced by tobacco, such as paralysis of the limbs, along with a terrible irritation of the nerves that are not paralysed, speak clearly of the power of this narcotic. If one would "strike at the root" of his malady he will break his pipe if he uses one, or he may abandon all hope of really good health

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in the world. Then there is opium. This is used to an incredible extent among the masses of our people, and has a large share in producing the disease and degeneracy that prevail. In the form of laudanum it is sold by our druggists among the working people to a marvelous extent. And it is at the root in many cases of disease. While it is continued it is perfect folly to expect a cure of those diseases which it continually produces. It gives most delicious relief in many cases, and that for a shorter or longer time; but when that time expires the relief is changed into an aggravation of the malady. It becomes one of the most hopeless of tasks to cure one who cannot be got beyond the reach of this most ruinous drug. Now we have other and worse forms of poison used by those whose duty it is to cure disease, but who in the use they make of these, only protract instead of curing. There is chloral for instance, a most powerful narcotic, and one which gives relief from restlessness and pain in some cases in a wonderful way. But like opium, it too creates forms of disease that are of the most terrible character. If it is being frequently used in any case it is useless to think of cure while that use is continued.

"In the 'Elements of Materia Medica' we find the following: "This remarkable substance, which until the last few months was prepared only as a chemical curiosity, is now an article of ordinary commerce." These words were published in 1872, and since then the drug to which they refer is numbering among its fruits so many victims that "Chloralism" is becoming a recognized disease far from uncommon. The writer says: It is prepared by passing chlorine gas, dried by allowing it to bubble through oil of vitrol into absolute alcohol for some hours, or so long as it is absorbed. The alcohol is at first kept cool, but the temperature is gradually raised until the liquid boils. Large quantities of hydro-chloric acid gas are evolved. The impure product is mixed with thrice its volume of sulphuric acid, and after standing, the upper stratum of oily liquid is drawn off and rectified from a small quantity of sulphuric acid. The distillate thus obtained is chloral; to prepare the hydrate it is mixed with a small quantity of water; on cooling it crystallizes."

Even an ordinary reader who has got the least idea of the relation of substances here employed in the development of the deadly drug will expect in some measure, to find that its passing into ordinary commerce is a serious matter. We feel constrained to call attention to the real principle on which all such drugs are used. The principle is that of purchasing a

brief season of unconsciousness at the expense of such injury to the nervous system as insures future distress, and lays the foundation for lifelong misery. The state which follows the use of a few grains of hydrate of chloral is not properly sleep, it is unconsciousness,—that is when the result is what appears to be sleep—but it is not the same thing as natural sleep. So it is with bromide of potassium. That is given to produce sleep, and it requires only a short time of regular use to produce such lassitude and loss of power over the muscles as constitutes a truly dreadful form of disease. It is utterly hopeless to think of remedy from any other treatment if this use of potassium is carried on. Then there is digitalis so constantly given in irritations of the heart. In “The Elements of Materia Medica,” by Bently and Redwood, a book of authority, we read that the power of the heart is enfeebled by digitalis, so that a sudden change of posture has often proved fatal. But this poison goes on “soothing” a patient so constantly that though all the time it is taking away life it is looked upon as a blessing. A patient, for instance, has been for many months using digitalis. Somehow, though always “soothed” and his pulse rendered regular when he gets the drug, he does not recover health. He rather gets worse upon the whole. He is persuaded to abandon it, but all else fails to soothe him so as to carry him over the weaning time. He falls back upon digitalis, and dies in a few days. Could you make that patient throw away his first dose of this powerful poison and never seek another, you would prolong his days by years, and might cure him of all illness he feels. But if you cannot get the root of his worst malady removed, nothing you can do will save his life.

Aconite is another deadly drug often prescribed in certain cases of disease. If it is used with anything like frequency, it will produce death in spite of all the remedial appliances that any human being can use, but even at long intervals it will render nerve cure impossible. No ignorant talk of ten thousand doctors will hinder the deadly action of this powerful poison if it is only given. A very little study of the poison will satisfy any true thinker of this. Begin

with the account of aconite as given in any good work on *Materia Medica*, and you will have a fair start. You will find there that aconite is "A Benumber." It is recommended in PAIN as a fit remedy because it removes the pain by "BENUMBING." You must here mark very specially that the benumbing is not that of the pain only, it is that of all sense in the parts benumbed. The drug relieves pain only by destroying so far the sensibility of the nerves affected. It destroys the motor capacity as well as the sensory. It in fact destroys, so far as it goes, the vital capacity of that nerve system which supplies the motor and sensory nerves. If the dose is sufficiently strong the heart ceases action altogether. The smallest dose just as far has an effect of the same nature according to its smallness—that is, it is so far poisonous to the nerves—that is again, it so far KILLS the person to whom it is given.

Let us now follow out somewhat the light which we have acquired on our subject. Here is a patient who is helpless, because the motor nerves have been so disabled that he cannot move himself in any way. The nerves of sensation, however, are excessively keen. A pulsating is felt all over the body preventing sleep, and a dose of aconite is given. The pulsating ceases inasmuch as this sensory system is "benumbed". RELIEF is felt, and the doctor is thanked and praised. But what about the motor nerves? Has the aconite had no effect on them? It has had even a greater effect. What of the nutritive nerves and their supply of life to both motor and sensory? The drug has acted, in the first instance, on these, and only through these, on the sensory, so as to deprive them so far of life, and compel them to cease giving pain. If then we are laboring to give life and motion of the muscles, by renewing the nerve action in them, what is the effect produced? It is to take away more life in a few seconds than we shall be able to renew in as many days—perhaps in as many weeks! It is in this way that we find the use of drugs like these ruining the nerve system faster than any one can renew it.

We particularise these drugs because they are so common in the prescription of our medical men,

and even among the people without prescription altogether. They interpose terrible barriers in the way of our doing the good we might otherwise do, and in the way of many who make good use of common sense remedies. In another paper we shall hope to take up another aspect of this subject. In the meantime we would like to make one or two practical remarks on this aspect. The first of these is, that we must not expect instant or even very speedy results from getting a poisonous drug discontinued. Take digitalis, for instance. You have a case in which this has been used three times a day in the twenty-four hours and that for many months. You succeed in getting the patient free from this constant poisoning, But the heart does not all at once recover. It seems as if it would do so. The patient under active treatment; such as increases the vital force, rallies for some days, but a time comes around at which the heart's action seems to demand the poison afresh. It is exactly the same as the case of the person who has fallen a victim to alcohol. He signs the pledge under some strong moral impulse, and feels free from the demon that has cursed him. But that freedom is only for a brief season. It may be for days—even weeks, aye, for months; yet, at a certain time the mysterious nervous state that proves so dreadful to him, comes on, and even his soul is bartered for alcohol. So it is with all habits of soothing by means of poison. Now, one who would heal his fellow creatures must be aware of this. We have cured cases in which the patients had to be put under physical restraint when this time came, and the apparent need for this drug was developed. During day and night the piteous cry had to be disregarded in seeming cruelty; but the victim was rescued. In other cases the root of the upas tree was put back into the soil again, and the life was lost. Even infants at the breast show this terrible power by which the use of poison enchains the spirit of man. Hence, if you would cure, you must succeed, in the first place in getting such roots of disease as we have described effectually removed. There will be not only a difficulty showing itself in the desire of the patient for the drug that is killing him,—that will not be the greatest

difficulty; but the increase of illness, apparently because of stopping the poisoning process, will be greater. What is called "the weaning brash" of the sucking is found in nearly all such cases. But this must be bravely met, if you would cure your patient. You may mitigate the "brash" in various ways; but when you have done the best that can be done, patience and intelligent courage will be called for. Even the tobacco victim, as he lies during the night in agony for want of "the pipe," and his tenderhearted wife begs him to take a smoke, must have courage for a little, and he will laugh at his anguish. So will the man who thought he would die if he did not get his drug. It is well worth while to "hold the fort" till deliverance comes.

INJECTING MORPHIA under the skin is another form of using poison for the relief of pain. All pain is the result of something wrong and affecting the nerves of sensation so as to induce us to put that wrong to rights. The injection of morphia does not, in any case, right the wrong. At the very utmost it only silences the nerves which indicate the wrong. This drug, while it does not cure, or put the wrong right, causes such injury to the nerve system as constitutes, of itself, a very serious disease. A nerve that has been silenced by means of opium, when it returns to activity does so in a sadly disordered condition. This has the effect of adding to the distress of the sufferer often very seriously. The addition, too, goes on increasing as the futile operation is repeated. It is thus that disease takes a mental form of the most dreadful character. The poor sufferer is made to endure horrors that never arise except through the use of some nerve-destroying agency. But the all important matter here is to know how to act when it is proposed in any case to inject any form of opium, or any similar poison. The first thing to be understood clearly in all such cases is this—the medical attendant knows no real remedy for the pain, or its cause, when he proposes to relieve in this way. Mark this well. It is of immense importance to understand the ignorance of your adviser in relation to cure in your case. You must remember that it by

no means follows, because your physician knows no remedy, that there is none. We have seen cases in which such a remedy as this was proposed, in which all pain disappeared within half an hour, and did not return, by nothing further being done than a cold cloth being gently pressed over the root of the nerve, which was giving terrible pain. The medical man did not know that a gentle cooling of a particular spot would cure his patient; he only knew that a little morphia injected would deaden the sensibility and give temporary relief. We could not imagine his doing as he proposed to do, if he had known how actually to cure his patients at first. In other cases he would visit day by day until his bill rose to a very heavy sum indeed, while, if he had only known, one visit or two at the utmost would have been amply sufficient. His ignorance was lucrative, perhaps you might be disposed to say; but it is the least that can be said that such ignorance is confessed the instant a medical man proposes to inject morphia. He confesses that he knows nothing that can put the wrong afflicting you right, and that he can only silence the poor nerves that are complaining. If he is alive to this truth, and sees that you are alive to it also, it may stimulate his intelligence, and possibly lead him to seek about a little for a real remedy.

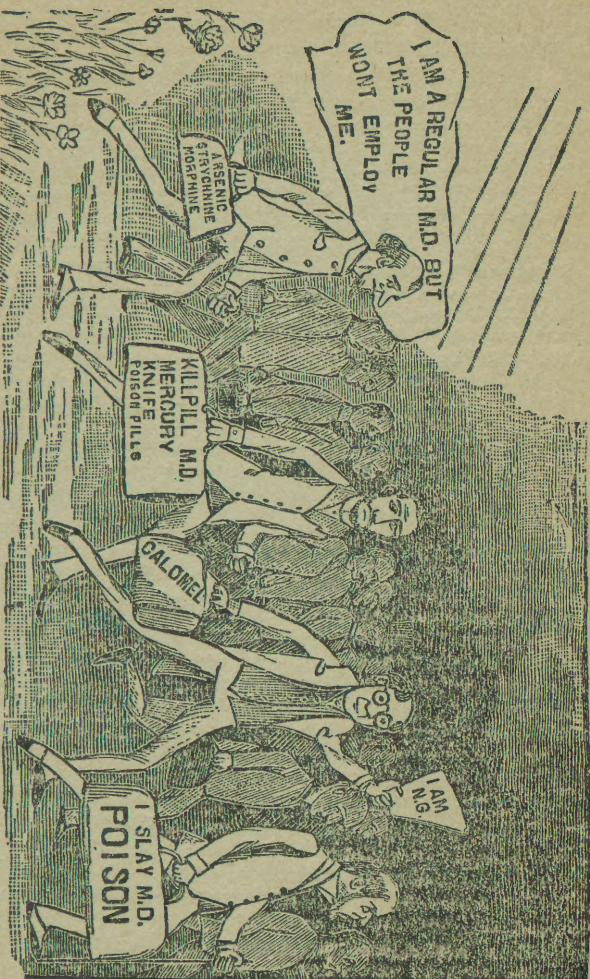
For example, you may be in torture by a pain in some part of your body. Your medical adviser knows the nerve that gives this pain. He proposes the injection of morphia. He is ignorant of anything better than this miserable subterfuge in the way of cure. Suppose that you try a very hot application, say a hot bran poultice, to the roots of the nerves affected, if you can guess about where those roots are. The doctors should help you to know this much. The hot poultice is put on, we shall say it fails to relieve. Well, you put on a cold application at the same place. That relieves slightly. The hot one may have done, so, or this may have done so. That will turn upon the nature of the wrong which is causing the pain. Observe this, that whichever of the applications relieves should be followed up vigorously. Do not say, "Oh, it gives relief for a little, and then the pain re-

turns." Follow up the little relief, and change from heat to cold, as the pain or relief indicates. You can do no possible harm by such processes, and in multitudes of cases all will soon be right, and no opiate required at all. But you must not think all remedies at an end when you have tried one or two singly, and relief does not yet come. The large, hot poultice may be put on the roots of the affected nerves, and ice cold cloths placed on the branches at the same time. Then ice cold may be placed on the roots and hot on the branches. The doctor, perhaps, has not thought of such things. He has only confessed his ignorance of all remedies; but that is no reason why you should not think of them. It seems to us rather a strong reason why you should think of something yourself, when one who ought to know confesses that he does not. But remedies are not exhausted, by any means, when you have thought of two or three applications of heat and cold. The whole nerve system can be influenced by the rubbing of the head and spinal region, so as to wake up a strong increase of vital action in the nerve centres there. We have seen a patient who had been for months under medical treatment, and in agony, except when deadened with narcotics, rendered independent of all such things by a little skillful rubbing alone. Perhaps you object that these remedies are "very simple." Well, that would be no great harm; but if they are so simple you are surely a simpleton if you let your poor nerves be killed with morphia while such obvious remedies are at hand. Perhaps you say, "if we call a doctor we must do as he orders." So, we suppose, if you call a priest you must risk your soul on him, as you risk your body, and sometimes soul too, on a doctor. No; that is not reason. If the priest tells you that he knows no cure for your soul, see if you may not know better for yourself and for him too. If a doctor confesses similar ignorance try a similar course. Be you quite sure that your Father in Heaven has not left you remedies that only go to make your afflictions ten times worse than they would otherwise be. PROF. KIRK.

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